



## JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERAN SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

### **IN-STATE TUITION FOR SERVICE MEMBERS**

1. **ISSUE:** To provide in-state tuition for service members of the active and reserve forces at Virginia state colleges while stationed in Virginia.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
  - Forty-four other states already offer this benefit to service members.
  - The 2006 General Assembly passed a bill which provides that dependents of active duty service members, who were stationed in Virginia, would be considered state residents for the purpose of determining tuition rates at Virginia colleges and universities. The bill was signed into law and took effect 1 July 2006.
  - The actual service members were not included under this law.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
  - **Recruiting/Retention Incentive:** Assistance in paying the high costs of college tuition has proven to be a very powerful recruiting and retention incentive for the armed forces. A highly effective recruiting and retention program is imperative to keep our military strong in the Global War on Terror and to be effective in responding to homeland security threats as well as natural disasters.
  - **No financial impact:** By taking the same approach as was taken for military dependents under the 2006 law, in-state tuition for service members would have no financial impact on the state budget. Service members stationed in Virginia would be considered in-state residents for the purposes of college tuition. They would compete for in-state slots as any other Virginia resident. Therefore, no state funding would be required.
  - **Military friendly:** By treating service members stationed in Virginia as “one of our own,” Virginia is demonstrating that it has taken another step toward being considered one of the most military friendly states in the country. Virginia would be rewarding those who are subject to being sent in harms way and who endure many hardships in order to protect the liberty and security of all Virginians.
  - **Encourages a quality workforce:** This powerful message of friendliness toward the military population would have a strong impact on service members as they leave the service and they would be more inclined to settle in Virginia. Ex-servicemen and women, with their training and strong work ethic, would be very valuable assets to Virginia and its economy. Assistance in obtaining a college degree would assist service members in finding meaningful employment as they leave the service.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the General Assembly pass legislation which provides that service members, both the active and reserve, who are stationed in Virginia be considered in-state residents for the purposes of tuition rates at all public colleges and universities in Virginia.